

VZCZCXRO0837
RR RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHNT #1357/01 2120537
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 310539Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1215
INFO ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
CIS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0096
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TASHKENT 001357

SIPDIS
NOFORN
DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO USOFFICE ALMATY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/07/31
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AORC](#) [RS](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: Uzbekistan: Rumors of Succession Planning, Government
Reshuffling

CLASSIFIED BY: Steven Prohaska, Second Secretary, State, Pol-Econ;
REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (S/NF) Summary: On July 28, a member of the Government of Uzbekistan relayed to us a number of discussions taking place within Uzbekistan's Presidential Apparatus about succession planning and government reshuffling. Some members of the Apparatus believe that Gulnora Karimova will become President of Uzbekistan, and a current succession scenario envisions Karimov stepping aside to become Chairman of Uzbekistan's Senate. Other possible personnel changes include enhancing NSC Secretary Ataev's influence and perhaps having him take NSS Chairman Inoyatov's place; promoting First Deputy Prime Minister Azimov to Prime Minister; and replacing Foreign Minister Norov with Ambassador Kamilov. While the claims are intriguing, it is important to note that these are only rumors-many of which we are unable to corroborate-reported to be circulating among elites in the Government of Uzbekistan. Rumors not backed by concrete evidence can run wild in places like Uzbekistan, where accurate, official information is difficult to access, and we would not be surprised if many of these predictions do not come to pass. End summary.

Gulnora Gunning for the Presidency?

12. (S/NF) On July 28, an Embassy contact (a senior member of Uzbekistan's Oliy Majlis) told Embassy's FSN Political Assistant that members of the Presidential Apparatus are now suspecting that Gulnora Karimova will eventually succeed President Karimov. These officials said that Karimova has been actively trying to develop a relationship with the West, and is planning to make a speech later this Fall in Washington DC under the auspices of the Center for Political Studies (an Uzbek "think tank") in order to further boost her ties to senior U.S. Government officials. They said that she had met with former President Bill Clinton in Europe recently, and Gulnora is hoping that a connection with him will allow her to establish good relations with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. (Note: We were able to corroborate that Gulnora Karimova had met at least momentarily with former President Clinton in Cannes, France on one of Gulnora's websites, www.gulnarakarimova.com, which

displays a photo of both of them at a charity fund to combat AIDS.
End note.)

Inoyatov on His Way Out?

13. (S/NF) The Embassy contact described a current succession scenario circulating among members of the Apparatus, which envisions Karimov handing over the Presidency to Gulnora Karimova and then becoming Chairman of Uzbekistan's Senate. Per the text of Uzbekistan's Constitution, the Chairman of the Senate has the power to choose the Chairman of the National Security Service. President Karimov has not, however, allowed the current Chairman of the Senate to exercise this power. The source noted that Karimov certainly would have the authority to do this if he assumed this position, however.

14. (S/NF) During the meeting with Undersecretary Burns, National Security Council Secretary Murat Ataev sat next to President Karimov, the contact said. (Note: We do know that Ataev was in the room during this meeting. End note.) This was very unusual. Citing some views in the Apparatus, he indicated that Karimov intends to give Ataev more power in order to balance him against Inoyatov, and may be planning to replace Inoyatov with Ataev later on. President Karimov, the source said, is retaining Prime Minister

TASHKENT 00001357 002 OF 003

Mirziyayev for the time being, but members of the Apparatus and Karimov perceived him as unprofessional and Karimov was planning to replace him at an appropriate time. First Deputy Prime Minister Azimov would move up to Prime Minister.

15. (S/NF) President Karimov also remained interested in surrounding Inoyatov with "deputies" who would keep tabs on him and report on him. Inoyatov, however, was aware of the intent behind this and consistently found "kompromat" (compromising material) on such "deputies." He would then forward this information to President Karimov, necessitating their removal. Members of the Presidential Apparatus said that Inoyatov had amassed considerable amounts of kompromat on other officials, including on members of the Karimov family. Some in the Apparatus were speculating that if Inoyatov is in fact dismissed from his position and chooses to use this kompromat against the Karimov family, the family would have him "terminated."

Recent Changes, Possible Future Changes in the GOU

16. (S/NF) The Embassy contact also reported other government reshuffling rumors percolating around the Presidential Apparatus. One of these indicates that Mir-Akbar Rakhmankulov will be dismissed from his post as Director of the Institute for Strategic and Inter-regional Studies (ISIS) in the near future, but will retain his other position as First Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council. Apparatus members believed that NSS Chairman Inoyatov was planning to put one of his own NSS officers in charge of ISIS. A recent change at the NSC is the addition of a Principal Consultant named Aripov, who previously served at Uzbekistan's Embassy in Washington DC and was recalled to Uzbekistan for this position after winning favorable attention from President Karimov for a written piece on international organizations.

¶7. (S/NF) Apparat members also indicated that President Karimov had denied permission to Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov to attend the U.S. Embassy's recent Independence Day celebration. (Note: According to Embassy's FSN Political Assistant, President Karimov himself decides which GOU officials will be allowed to attend Embassy receptions. End note.) They believed that, in President Karimov's view, Uzbek Ambassador Kamilov is more skilled than Norov, and has improved Uzbekistan's relations with the United States. Karimov was considering replacing Norov with Kamilov.

¶8. (S/NF) A Deputy Prime Minister named Hanov-with responsibilities including social services, construction, and the production of construction materials-had recently become the victim of political intrigue. Apparat members indicated that during a routine government meeting, he had harshly criticized various chairmen of state committees and GOU agencies. After Hanov's exit from the conference room, these officials immediately began to conspire against him and reached out to their respective "krishas," or "roofs," in order to have him demoted. Apparently the campaign was successful, and resulted in Hanov being relegated to a Department Chief position in the Cabinet of Ministers.

Increasingly Pro-NATO, Anti-CSTO?

TASHKENT 00001357 003 OF 003

¶9. (S/NF) The Embassy contact also indicated that Uzbekistan's think tanks were studying the possibility of Uzbekistan making a bid for NATO membership if Azerbaijan acceded to the alliance. Uzbekistan's relations with Russia were deteriorating, and Karimov was extremely distrustful of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The source indicated that Karimov views the CSTO as a potential threat down the road, and believes Russian security services could use the organization as a platform to launch a coup d'etat in Uzbekistan because Karimov has been ignoring Russian interests in the region. Karimov was supposedly planning to informally approach other Central Asian leaders on the margins of a CSTO conference to mobilize opposition against the opening of any Russian base in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. (Comment: Aside from Karimov's opposition to a new Russian base in Osh, which is a new data point for us, this account of Karimov's distrust of Russia and the CSTO does track well with recent commentary we have heard from other senior GOU officials. End comment.)

Comment:

¶10. (S/NF) This Embassy contact has provided some reliable information-including copies of official internal government documents-to Post in the past. While the claims are certainly intriguing, it is important to note that these are only rumors-many of which we are unable to corroborate-reported to be circulating among elites in the Government of Uzbekistan. They should thus be taken with a large grain of salt. Such rumors can be prevalent in Uzbekistan, where accurate, official information is difficult to access. Furthermore, even if these claims accurately reflect prevailing sentiments in the Presidential Apparat about government planning, plans can change. It also seems that it would serve President Karimov's interests to be extraordinarily discreet about any succession plans or government reshufflings that he may be considering. These predictions may simply reflect the hopes of those in the Apparat who lack concrete evidence of such planning. A more sinister possibility is that the talk is intended to direct the wrath of Karimov or clan power-brokers against particular

individuals due to personal grudges. In any case, we would not be surprised if many of these predictions do not come to pass.
BUTCHER